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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 9015
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0100
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0462
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0441
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0440
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0419
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000502

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA, DS/IP/AF, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/OSAC
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON
OSLO FOR HELENA SCHRADER
DOE FOR GPERSON, CAROLYN GAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR FLISER
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/13/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: IJAW MILITANTS ANNOUNCE CEASEFIRE; DESOPADEC BOARD
REAPPOINTED WITH COMMUNITY APPROVAL

REF: A. LAGOS 452
 [B.](#) LAGOS 485
 [C.](#) LAGOS 310

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Classified By: Ambassador Donald McConnell for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[11.](#) (SBU) Summary: On July 6, Ijaw militant leaders agreed to a 90-day ceasefire during which government could address their interests, which focus on gaining greater control over local government areas and resources. However, Rivers State criminal/militant leaders Ateke Tom and Soboma George did not attend this meeting and it is not clear whether hostilities in Rivers State will ebb. Delta State oil producing communities counted a small victory with the dissolution of the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) and re-nomination of its board members which they believe will result in improved government relations and access to the state's derivation. End Summary.

Ondo to Akwa Ibom: Ijaw Militants
Announce 90 Day Ceasefire

[12.](#) (C) On July 6, Ijaw militant leaders from Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom states, including Chief

Government Ekpemupolo (known as Tom Polo) and Dokubo Asari, agreed upon a series of recommendations they will submit to the government for improving the welfare of people in the region (Ref B). They also announced a 90-day cessation of militant activities. Sheriff Mulade, President of the Gbaramatu Youth Council in Delta State, told Poloff on July 11 that the militant leaders concluded the meeting in agreement on four demands: the creation of more hinterland and riverine states with their own capitals; the creation of responsible and non-marginalized local government areas (LGAs) which could develop riverine and inland areas; an end to government and multinational payments which perpetuate negative behavior; and a visit by the President or Vice President to Bayelsa State (an Ijaw-homogenous state) for dialogue with indigenes. When asked whether these demands are realistic, Mulade responded that the militants view control over the local government areas as their most important priority.

¶3. (C) Mulade said this meeting was well attended, however, three individuals were noticeably absent. Ateke Tom and Soboma George of Rivers State chose not to attend, nor did Joshua McGuyver of Bayelsa State. As the result of their failure to attend, Mulade told Poloff, the three were notified that they would no longer be considered militants by the group but would be labeled criminals. Mulade suggested they would no longer benefit from the protection or camaraderie the group affords.

¶4. (C) According to press reports appearing several days after the militant meeting took place, Ateke Tom renounced kidnapping and hostage taking, purportedly to allow the Federal Government and newly created Rivers State Peace and Rehabilitation Committee "a chance to improve the lives of the youths and the masses." (Comment: It is unclear whether

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Tom's unilateral announcement allowed him to achieve post hoc rapprochement with Ijaw militant leaders. End Comment.)

The DESOPADEC Phoenix: Birth, Dissolution & Rebirth
Small Victory for Oil Producing Communities

¶5. (C) Oil producing communities in Delta State demanded the dissolution of the newly-created Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) board because two of the ten politically appointed DESOPADEC board members did not hail from oil producing communities (Ref A). Mulade praised DESOPADEC as the only state government body with the capacity to "give communities a say," which is why communities demanded board members all hail from oil producing areas. Following community clamoring, the Delta State House of Assembly in early July dissolved the board on the grounds that its members were appointed before the Commission was officially approved. Tom Polo advised Governor Uduaghan and former DESOPADEC Chairman Chief Wellington Okrika to respect the Assembly's dissolution of the board and to submit a new list of names, Mulade said. Mulade viewed the Governor's decision to heed Polo's advice as a harbinger of positive government relations with militants, youths, and communities.

¶6. (SBU) On July 11, the Delta State House of Assembly began publicly to review the Governor's ten new DESOPADEC nominees. Mulade described most nominees as "okay;" some, he commented, were known to be more involved with their communities than others. Chief Wellington Okrika was approved by the State Assembly to serve a second term as DESOPADEC Chairman. Mulade described Okrika as a well respected Delta State indigene from whom communities expect to see strong leadership as he has shown his ability as a traditional leader in the Gbaramatu Kingdom to "develop key communities." Mulade thought the new DESOPADEC board members would be inaugurated around July 14.

17. (U) According to press reports, the Itsekiri National Youth Council (INYC) in Delta State commended Governor Uduaghan for retaining Mr. Toritsemotse, the only Itsekiri on the DESOPADEC board. The INYC spokesman also praised DESOPADEC for being the only vehicle through which oil producing communities can benefit from the oil wealth extracted from their areas.

Comment

18. (C) These steps by Ijaw militants, including the newly released Dokubo Asari, toward resolution of the Niger Delta crisis are heartening. There is reason to believe the militants' desire to control LGAs is at least in part to improve delivery of basic services and provide development. Moreover, the Ijaw militants' move to define as criminal those individuals who refuse to follow their leadership is likely to be helpful to the government in determining its response to future criminal activities. Nonetheless, while these Ijaw militant leaders appear to be giving the

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government a chance, it remains to be seen what, beyond "dialogue" and meetings, the federal and state governments will do in response. End Comment.

MCCONNELL